

met with teachers, with parents, with administrators, and with business leaders. They all had concerns with No Child Left Behind. That is why I think the recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, a landmark piece of bipartisan legislation, hopefully will fix the outdated policies of that No Child Left Behind legislation.

The new legislation, the new law we just passed, takes into consideration the collective criticisms of the teachers, the students, parents, administrators, business leaders, and everyone who is involved in the education of our children. The ESSA has the support of many civil rights groups, teaching groups, and community institutions.

I would like to highlight a few of the improvements our parents and students can look forward to with this new law.

During the No Child Left Behind era, schools were not held accountable for ensuring that the most disadvantaged students actually were aided and helped to get an education. The Every Student Succeeds Act changes this. It benefits low-income students, minority students, English language learners by requiring the schools to include student data about these groups so that we can make better policy for the accountability of how these students learn.

States are also required to create exit and entrance exams for English language learners, ensuring that they will actually receive attention in these classrooms and will learn.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that we all think that there are way too many tests in life every single day, and of course it is not the favorite part of the school day to take a test. The high-stakes testing that was under No Child Left Behind has created a lot of anxiety campuswide. Teachers felt the need to teach to the test, rather than actually teach the student that critical learning that must take place in the classroom at an early age.

My mom was a teacher. She finally got out because she got tired of teaching to the test, test, test, test. She had seven kids, and they all have master's and Ph.D.s. She was a parent teacher before she went to teach in the classroom, and she knew that students learn in different ways, that not everybody learned the same way.

She would work with students. Some students learn verbally, some by test-taking, others by acting out plays that get across the idea. There was no time in the classroom after No Child Left Behind. It was just one way: the test, the test, the test.

I am proud to say that high-stakes testing under the new law will no longer disadvantage our schools who don't pass those tests. There are going to be other ways, including tests, to decide whether schools, teachers, and educators are doing well by our children in the classroom. Testing students will not be the end-all of what is happening in the classrooms.

Schools also have the flexibility to pilot innovative testing measures, allowing more time for learning in the classroom.

I am excited about this new law, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that we continue to look at it and make sure that every child has a chance in this education system.

REPEAL OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, an interesting thing happened when President Obama was elected in 2008: We basically had a national consensus about some elements of health care. What I mean by that is, most people recognized two things about our healthcare system that were flawed. First, they recognized that it was too expensive; and, second, they recognized that people with a preexisting condition should be included and not be excluded from an insurance pool. There was a great deal of consensus around that, and that is where the opportunity was for the Obama team to bring the country together around those two core things.

Instead, they did something different. Instead, they went out on a highly partisan path, and that was to create ObamaCare. We were told that the bill had to be passed in order to understand what was in it, and so forth and so on. We are familiar with the false premises and the false claims and the false narratives about it.

Do you remember this? We were told that if you liked your doctor, you got to keep your doctor. If you liked your insurance coverage, you got to keep your insurance coverage. Your insurance policies, the premiums per family were going to drop by over \$2,000 a year. None of that turned out to be true. None of it. People lost their coverage. People lost their physicians. Their premiums have gone up.

So now what has happened, there has been this effort, and the effort over the past several years has been met by some mockery from some who have said: Hey, your efforts to repeal ObamaCare, how many times are you going to do it? Do you know how many times we are going to do it? We are going to do it until it gets done. Now it is closer than ever.

I have three constituents that I want to briefly mention to you. One is a fellow that I connected with on the phone last night. His name is Jay. Jay told me that, notwithstanding the false promises of ObamaCare, his insurance premiums for him and his daughter have skyrocketed to the point where the amount of anxiety that he was communicating to me on the phone was palpable. This is not somebody who is just upset about the direction that the country has gone under this false claim of ObamaCare. He is fearful of it, and he is anxious for his future and the future of his daughter.

How about Diane? My other constituent is a 9-year breast cancer survivor who was told, if you like your doctor, you get to keep your doctor, until all of a sudden, her insurance policy, after ObamaCare, kicks her physician out of the group, and she doesn't have access to the doctor that had cared for her and kept her cancer-free for 9 years.

How about the small-business owner who I met with on Monday in Kane County, Illinois, who said: Congressman, we would really like to expand our business; we want to open up a new location. It was a restaurant. If we do it—and we have done the math—it is going to cost us \$150,000 a year in ObamaCare payments, and we can't afford to expand.

Here is what we have got to do: We have got to repeal this thing, and we have got to replace it and get back to those two core themes that say, let's deal with the underlying cost drivers in health care that make it more expensive than people can afford—and we can do that—and let's deal with the preexisting condition question. We can do that through high-risk pools and other things that don't cost the trillions of ObamaCare.

Now, there is an interesting thing that has been happening, and that is this: The story of ObamaCare is shifting. You ask, well, how is it shifting? It is shifting in this way: It is shifting because we have been told that there is no way to undo this. There is no way. It is basically orthodoxy in our country. It is an entitlement, which it is, and it is so deeply embedded that it is all a fait accompli. In other words, there is no way to undo this.

For a long time, that appeared to be—although it wasn't true, it appeared to be true because the Senate blocked its passage. Now, as we know, the other body has actually preceded us in this and, through the reconciliation activity, we are now able to avoid the 60-vote threshold. A simple majority of United States Senators can join with a majority of the United States House of Representatives, which I would argue is reflecting a majority of the American public, to say: Get this thing off our backs. Let us flourish. Yeah, we can deal with these things. Yes, health care needs improving, but this thing on our backs is simply smothering us.

So here is the opportunity. This will be on President Obama's desk. Will he veto it? Absolutely. It is the first time it has ever gotten on his desk before. What it says is this: that there is only one office between us and the repeal of ObamaCare. One office is between us and the repeal of ObamaCare, and that office changes next November. So in 11 months, there is every opportunity for us to see its repeal and, ultimately, its replacement.

REDONDO UNION HIGH SCHOOL PROTEST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HAHN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, this upcoming Monday, the Westboro Baptist Church plans to hold protests outside of Redondo Union High School in Redondo Beach, California. We have seen these protests before, often at the funerals of our fallen servicemen and -women. They are known, unfortunately, for their hateful message, especially against LGBT Americans.

The members of this church believe that America's generation of high schoolers is "utterly without hope." They say that because these young students are promoting acceptance and inclusion of all people, regardless of whether they are gay or straight.

I couldn't disagree more with their premise of calling these students "without hope." I think because these students are promoting acceptance and inclusion of all people, regardless of whether they are gay or straight, they are building a future full of hope. I have the utmost faith in the next generation as the future leaders of this Nation.

Of course, no matter how much I disagree with this group, these individuals should be allowed to exercise their right to protest, and they do have a right to free speech in this country. The students have those same rights, and an inspiring group of Redondo High students are organizing a peaceful counterprotest on Monday.

Yesterday, I wrote a letter to the members of the school's Gay-Straight Alliance and told them that I wished I could be there on Monday to protest alongside of them. These students deserve to live in a world where they can be who they are and love whom they choose. In standing up against hate and living a life of acceptance, inclusion, and understanding, they are making that world a reality.

I know my colleague here, TED LIEU, who represents Redondo Beach, joins me in saying that we are so proud of these students. We are proud of their courage, their bravery, their intelligence, and skill in standing up for what they know is right, just, and for being brave enough to organize a counterprotest.

□ 1045

I am going to be in Washington, D.C., on Monday. But if I were not here, I would want to be standing alongside each and every student to show my solidarity with them. Instead, let me tell them that I will be there in spirit.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Miami-Dade

County Public Schools, where the graduation rate recently reached an all-time high of 78.1 percent for the 2014–2015 academic year, surpassing the State average of 77.8 percent.

This is a 1.5 percent growth from last year's rate, marking the highest graduation rate MDCPS has achieved since the Florida Department of Education began implementing new standards to track graduation figures in the late 1990s. This is a landmark accomplishment, considering the major challenges Miami schools face, including high poverty rates and a large population of English language learners.

As a former member of the Miami-Dade County School Board, I salute the students, teachers, faculty, and parents for their dedication and for their commitment to excellence. I also want to recognize School Board Chair Perla Tabares-Hantman, my other former colleagues, and Superintendent Alberto Carvalho for their exceptional leadership. I think of them frequently, and I am constantly reminded of how fortunate our community is to have them.

To the entire MDCPS family, congratulations. You are a model for the Nation. I am proud to represent you.

BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT ACT OF 2015

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on October 24, 2015, Monroe County Sheriff's Deputy Josh Gordon found himself in a firefight with a robbery suspect on Stock Island in the Florida Keys. Amidst the exchange of gunfire, Deputy Gordon's bulletproof vest stopped a round of ammunition, ultimately saving his life. If a bullet would have strayed a few inches one way or another, the outcome could have been entirely different.

Every day, men and women in law enforcement put their lives on the line to ensure our safety. Incidents such as this shed light on the significance of effective body armor for those who protect us. Officers like Deputy Gordon are never off duty, and we must, in turn, do everything in our power to protect them.

To address this, I stand in strong support of H.R. 228, the Bulletproof Vest Grant Act of 2015, which extends the grant program for armored vests through fiscal year 2018. I strongly encourage Congress to pass this essential legislation and protect the backbone of our Nation's domestic defense.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PASSENGER RECORDS

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Miami International Airport and their record-breaking year in 2015. Forty-four million passengers passed through this world-renowned airport last year, shattering the previous annual record of 40.9 million passengers in 2014.

MIA has some of the most dedicated employees in the country who ensure passengers have a pleasant experience on their journey, whether visiting relatives, conducting business, or visiting the abundance of attractions south

Florida has to offer. Tens of thousands of passengers pass through MIA on a daily basis, and I am proud to recognize an airport that connects so many people throughout the world.

I offer my continued support to my friend, MIA Director Emilio Gonzalez, as his team works in the new year to attract more domestic and international routes, and I know cafecitos will continue to be available at each terminal so all visiting guests can enjoy the wonderful culture of south Florida.

VIOLENCE AGAINST SIKHS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support and stand with the Sikh community in the San Joaquin Valley.

In the past 2 weeks, two Sikh men have been brutally attacked and, very sadly, one of them was killed. He lost his life. The Fresno City Police Department has labeled these two crimes as potential hate crimes.

Amrik Singh Bal was attacked in the middle of the street while waiting for a ride so he could go to work, as any average American would do throughout our country. Gurcharan Singh Gill was killed while working at a local convenience store. Both tragic incidents took place in my district. My thoughts and prayers are with Amrik and his family, and my deepest sympathy and condolences go to the Gurcharan family for the loss.

The attacks on these innocent American citizens are really an attack on all American citizens who choose to practice their religion and observe their cultural heritage, as Americans do throughout our land.

Sadly, since September 11, 2001, the Sikh community has endured discrimination because of a lack of understanding of Sikhism, which is based on equality and love. They are not alone.

As a nation of immigrants, we must remember, we have an opportunity to learn and benefit from the thousands of different cultures that are part of the mosaic of what makes America great. After all, we are a nation of immigrants, both past and present, and we must never ever forget that.

Today, in Fresno, in spirit, we are all part of the Sikh community as we mourn these tragic incidents. Every American citizen, regardless of race, creed, or gender has the right to live free of fear and discrimination.

I commend Chief Dyer and the Fresno City Police Department for working diligently to find the individual or individuals who killed Gurcharan and for continuing to look for the other individuals who are responsible for the attack on Amrik.

I continue to urge the FBI and the U.S. Attorney General's office to work, as they have been, in making this investigation inquiry resolve itself, solving these very sad crimes that we